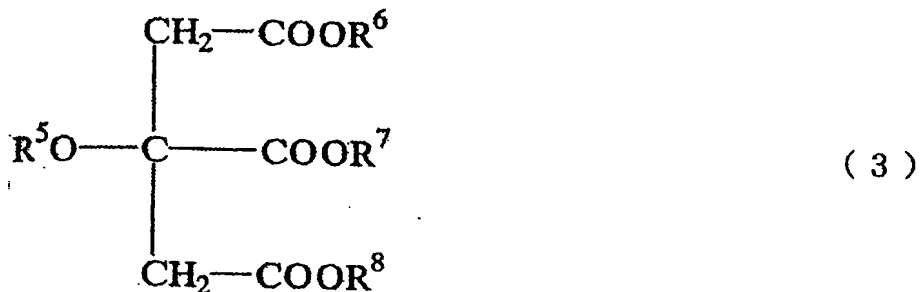


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## CLAIMS

1. (Deleted)

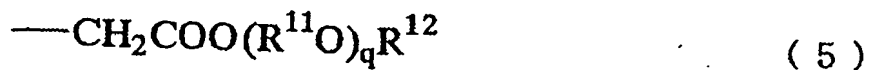
2. An ester compound represented by formula (3)



5 wherein R<sup>5</sup> is H, a C<sub>1-5</sub> aliphatic acyl group or a C<sub>6-12</sub> aromatic acyl group; R<sup>6</sup>, R<sup>7</sup> and R<sup>8</sup> each represent a group of formula (4) or (5)



wherein R<sup>9</sup> is a C<sub>1-6</sub> alkylene group; R<sup>10</sup> is a C<sub>1-10</sub> straight- or branched-chain alkyl group, a C<sub>6-12</sub> aryl group, a C<sub>7-15</sub> arylalkyl group or a C<sub>7-15</sub> alkylaryl group; and p is an integer from 0 to 6; and



wherein R<sup>11</sup> is a C<sub>1-6</sub> alkylene group; R<sup>12</sup> is a C<sub>1-10</sub> straight- or branched-chain alkyl group, a C<sub>6-12</sub> aryl group, a C<sub>7-15</sub> arylalkyl group or a C<sub>7-15</sub> alkylaryl group; and q is

an integer from 0 to 6;

with the proviso that the compound wherein  $R^6$ ,  $R^7$  and  $R^8$  are the same is excluded.

3. A plasticizer for biodegradable aliphatic  
5 polyester resins, the plasticizer comprising an ester of  
an aliphatic polybasic acid with at least two members  
selected from the group consisting of alcohols and ether  
alcohols.

4. A plasticizer for biodegradable aliphatic  
10 polyester resins according to claim 3, wherein the ester  
is a compound represented by formula (1)

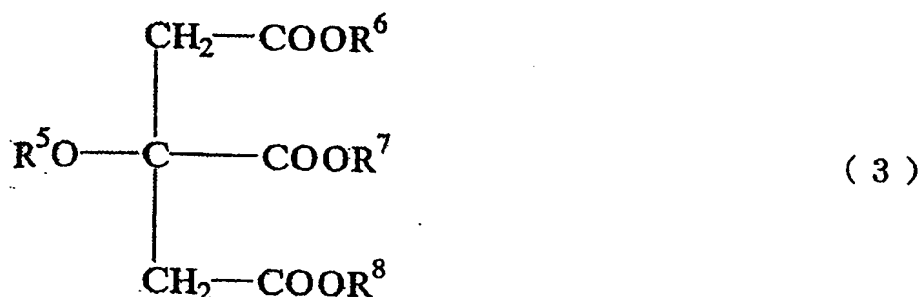


wherein  $R^1$  and  $R^2$  are different from each other and each  
represents a group of formula (2)



15 wherein  $R^3$  is a  $C_{1-6}$  alkylene group;  $R^4$  is a  $C_{1-10}$  straight-  
or branched-chain alkyl group, a  $C_{6-12}$  aryl group, a  $C_{7-15}$   
arylalkyl group or a  $C_{7-15}$  alkylaryl group; m is an integer  
from 0 to 8, and n is an integer from 0 to 6.

20 5. A plasticizer for biodegradable aliphatic  
polyester resins according to claim 3, wherein the ester  
is a compound represented by formula (3)

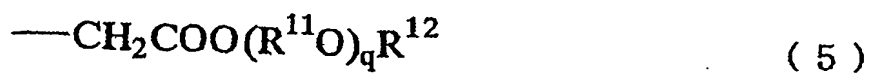


wherein R<sup>5</sup> is H, a C<sub>1-5</sub> aliphatic acyl group or a C<sub>6-12</sub> aromatic acyl group, and R<sup>6</sup>, R<sup>7</sup> and R<sup>8</sup> each represent a group of formula (4) or (5)



5

wherein R<sup>9</sup> is a C<sub>1-6</sub> alkylene group; R<sup>10</sup> is a C<sub>1-10</sub> straight- or branched-chain alkyl group, a C<sub>6-12</sub> aryl group, a C<sub>7-15</sub> arylalkyl group or a C<sub>7-15</sub> alkylaryl group; and p is an integer from 0 to 6; and



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wherein R<sup>11</sup> is a C<sub>1-6</sub> alkylene group; R<sup>12</sup> is a C<sub>1-10</sub> straight- or branched-chain alkyl group, a C<sub>6-12</sub> aryl group, a C<sub>7-15</sub> arylalkyl group or a C<sub>7-15</sub> alkylaryl group; and q is an integer from 0 to 6;

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with the proviso that the compound wherein R<sup>6</sup>, R<sup>7</sup> and R<sup>8</sup> are the same is excluded.

6. (Amended) Use of an ester compound  
represented by formula (1)



wherein  $\text{R}^1$  and  $\text{R}^2$  are different from each other and each  
5 represents a group of formula (2)



wherein  $\text{R}^3$  is a  $\text{C}_{1-6}$  alkylene group;  $\text{R}^4$  is a  $\text{C}_{1-10}$  straight-  
or branched-chain alkyl group, a  $\text{C}_{6-12}$  aryl group,  $\text{C}_{7-15}$   
arylalkyl group or a  $\text{C}_{7-15}$  alkylaryl group;  $m$  is an integer  
10 from 0 to 8, and  $n$  is an integer from 0 to 6,

as a plasticizer for biodegradable aliphatic polyester  
resins.

7. Use of a compound according to claim 2 as a  
plasticizer for biodegradable aliphatic polyester resins.

15 8. A biodegradable resin composition comprising  
(i) a biodegradable aliphatic polyester resin and (ii) a  
plasticizer comprising an ester of an aliphatic polybasic  
acid with at least two members selected from the group  
consisting of alcohols and ether alcohols.

20 9. A biodegradable resin composition according  
to claim 8, wherein the plasticizer is a compound  
represented by formula (1)

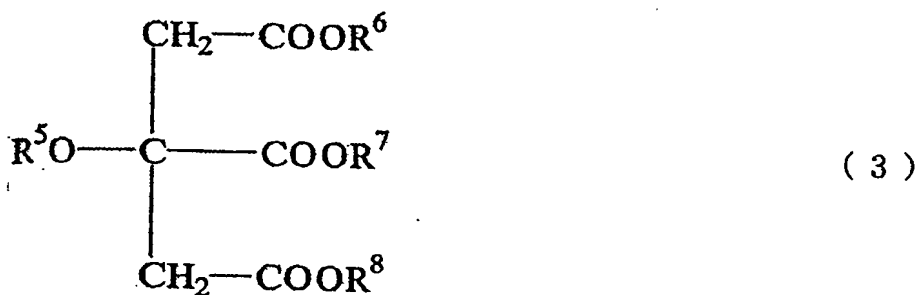


wherein  $R^1$  and  $R^2$  are different from each other and each represents a group of formula (2)



5 wherein  $R^3$  is a  $C_{1-6}$  alkylene group;  $R^4$  is a  $C_{1-10}$  straight- or branched-chain alkyl group, a  $C_{6-12}$  aryl group, a  $C_{7-15}$  arylalkyl group or a  $C_{7-15}$  alkylaryl group;  $m$  is an integer from 0 to 8; and  $n$  is an integer from 0 to 6.

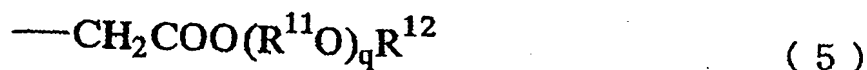
10. A biodegradable resin composition  
10 according to claim 8, wherein the plasticizer is a compound represented by formula (3)



wherein  $R^5$  is H, a  $C_{1-5}$  aliphatic acyl group or a  $C_{6-12}$  aromatic acyl group, and  $R^6$ ,  $R^7$  and  $R^8$  each represent a  
15 group of formula (4) or (5)



wherein  $R^9$  is a  $C_{1-6}$  alkylene group;  $R^{10}$  is a  $C_{1-10}$  straight- or branched-chain alkyl group, a  $C_{6-12}$  aryl group, a  $C_{7-15}$  arylalkyl group or a  $C_{7-15}$  alkylaryl group; and p is an integer from 0 to 6; and



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wherein  $R^{11}$  is a  $C_{1-6}$  alkylene group;  $R^{12}$  is a  $C_{1-10}$  straight- or branched-chain alkyl group, a  $C_{6-12}$  aryl group, a  $C_{7-15}$  arylalkyl group or a  $C_{7-15}$  alkylaryl group; and q is an integer from 0 to 6;

10                   with the proviso that the compound wherein  $R^6$ ,  $R^7$  and  $R^8$  are the same is excluded.

11. A biodegradable resin composition according to any one of claims 8, 9 and 10, wherein the biodegradable aliphatic polyester resin is at least one  
15 member selected from the group consisting of resins obtainable by condensation of hydroxycarboxylic acid(s) and resins obtainable by condensation of aliphatic dicarboxylic acid(s) and aliphatic diol(s).

12. A resin composition according to claim 11,  
20 wherein the biodegradable aliphatic polyester resin is a poly(lactic acid).

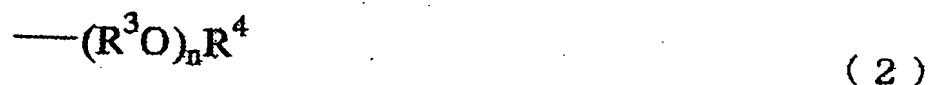
13. A resin composition according to claim 11, wherein the biodegradable aliphatic polyester resin is

polybutylene succinate, polybutylene succinate adipate or a mixture thereof.

14. A method for plasticizing a biodegradable aliphatic polyester resin, the method comprising adding to  
5 a biodegradable aliphatic polyester resin an ester compound represented by formula (1)



wherein  $\text{R}^1$  and  $\text{R}^2$  are different from each other and each represents a group of formula (2)



10

wherein  $\text{R}^3$  is a  $\text{C}_{1-6}$  alkylene group;  $\text{R}^4$  is a  $\text{C}_{1-10}$  straight- or branched-chain alkyl group, a  $\text{C}_{6-12}$  aryl group,  $\text{C}_{7-15}$  arylalkyl group or a  $\text{C}_{7-15}$  alkylaryl group;  $m$  is an integer from 0 to 8, and  $n$  is an integer from 0 to 6.

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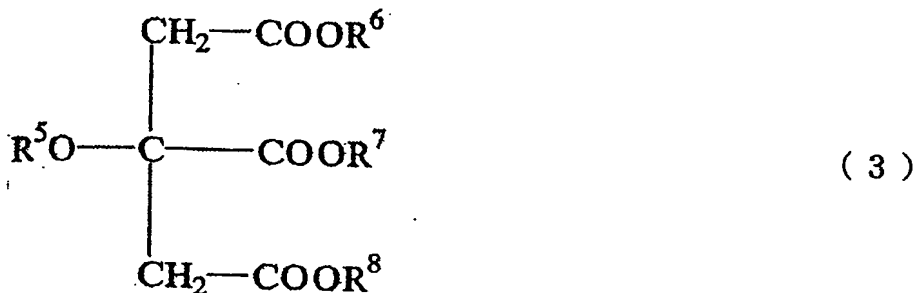
15. A method according to claim 14, wherein the biodegradable aliphatic polyester resin is a poly(lactic acid).

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16. A method according to claim 14, wherein the biodegradable aliphatic polyester resin is polybutylene succinate, polybutylene succinate adipate or a mixture thereof.

17. A method for plasticizing a biodegradable aliphatic polyester resin, the method comprising adding to

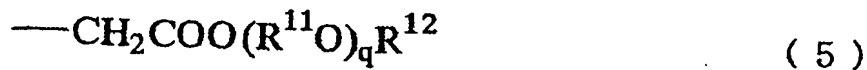
a biodegradable aliphatic polyester resin an ester compound represented by formula (3)



wherein  $\text{R}^5$  is H, a  $\text{C}_{1-5}$  aliphatic acyl group or a  $\text{C}_{6-12}$  aromatic acyl group; and  $\text{R}^6$ ,  $\text{R}^7$  and  $\text{R}^8$  each represent a group of formula (4) or (5)



wherein  $\text{R}^9$  is a  $\text{C}_{1-6}$  alkylene group;  $\text{R}^{10}$  is a  $\text{C}_{1-10}$  straight- or branched-chain alkyl group, a  $\text{C}_{6-12}$  aryl group, a  $\text{C}_{7-15}$  arylalkyl group or a  $\text{C}_{7-15}$  alkylaryl group; and  $p$  is an integer from 0 to 6; and



wherein  $\text{R}^{11}$  is a  $\text{C}_{1-6}$  alkylene group;  $\text{R}^{12}$  is a  $\text{C}_{1-10}$  straight- or branched-chain alkyl group, a  $\text{C}_{6-12}$  aryl group, a  $\text{C}_{7-15}$  arylalkyl group or a  $\text{C}_{7-15}$  alkylaryl group; and  $q$  is an integer from 0 to 6;



with the proviso that the compound wherein  $R^6$ ,  $R^7$  and  $R^8$  are the same is excluded.

18. A method according to claim 17, wherein the biodegradable aliphatic polyester resin is a poly(lactic  
5 acid).

19. A method according to claim 17, wherein the biodegradable aliphatic polyester resin is polybutylene succinate, polybutylene succinate adipate or a mixture thereof.